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Grammatical Madness: A Step Away from Formal Instruction

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By:

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Abstract:

In the international context of concerns surrounding standards in writing, this Honors Thesis addresses the role of grammar in the teaching of language awareness and writing. It considers both historical and current perspectives on knowledge about language. This thesis argues that there has yet been a critically research link on how language instruction is supported in the common core and the knowledge requirements of teachers.

The rationale behind this study lies in exploring the between traditional pedagogical approach to language and the language requirements required by the current education standards, the Common Core. Through research spanning from Australia to the United States, I will explore how this disconnect came to existence and what steps can be taken to close the gap between *teacher* knowledge of language and their understanding of the required language skills of their *students*. Currently students are falling short of achieving the stepping blocks established by the state adopted standards largely due to misconceptions about what knowledge of language is required.

Introduction:

This thesis is about grammar. Yes, grammar, that sinister seven letter word that plagued many students in their primary years. But this thesis is not designed to lecture on the do's and don'ts of punctuation or belabor prefect progressive aspects of sentences. Instead this thesis is built upon a body of research from Australia, England, and the United States of America to introduce an accessible approach to language instruction that teachers can work within to develop knowledge about language for both themselves and their students. Knowledge about language, which will be discussed in further detail later on, is the understanding of the roles, rules and situations that determine our choices in language. You may now be asking "Knowledge about language, didn't you say this was about grammar?" Why yes and these are one in the same. The largest difference between these two terms lies in the public stigma that surrounds grammar. The term 'grammar' implies error-hunting while the term 'knowledge of language' avoids this thinking and keeps the conversation on developing knowledge about the choices users have when writing, not mistakes.

Through researching previous studies on approaches to language and deconstructing the common core, I hope to explore the questions: What does the Common Core demand from teachers? And what background knowledge about language are many teachers bringing to the table? Analysis of the Common

Core's demand of language knowledge starts with a breakdown of the Common Core language itself, a set of standards Established by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO); explores the language requirements of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), then defines what we truly mean when we say 'grammar' and 'language' in the classroom. There is a growing disconnect between what teachers know about language, what they will be asked to teach and what the Common Core State Standards require students to master under teacher instruction.

There is no simple solution within these pages. Personal experience, historical variations, and discrepancies in teacher preparation programs are only the beginning of the story. In the international context of this study the concern about standards in teacher and student knowledge about language is a familiar story. Linguists in England, Australia, and the United States have been following the developments in language instruction in the classroom since the 1950's in an attempt to renew connections between linguistics and education. This particular study considers both a historical and current perspective on the teaching of grammar and understanding of language. This is not meant to be a solve all, but rather explores how grammar instruction is supported and driven by the Common Core and the stress it places on teacher knowledge.

Background Knowledge of Education Initiatives:

The state of Oregon has been realigning, reformatting, and essentially recreating its educational standards every few years for the last several decades. In fact, state education standards have been in use since the early 1990s. By the early 2000s, every state had developed and adopted its own set of learning standards that specified what students in each individual state, enrolled in primary and secondary education classrooms should be able to accomplish by the completion of each school year. These standards are designed to serve as guidelines for teachers to build their curriculum around and by which they will assess their students. In addition to their own benchmarks, every state also had its own definition of what it meant to reach proficiency, which is the level at which a student is determined to be sufficiently educated at each grade level and upon graduation. This lack of standardization across the nation was one reason why the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), led the development of the Common Core State Standards in 2009. Tracing the education reform history reveals how the national education standards have grown and changed to become what we know as the Common Core.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who believed that "full educational opportunity" should be "our first national goal." ESEA offered new grants to districts serving low-income students, federal grants for text and library books, it created special education centers, and created scholarships for low-income college students. Additionally, the law provided federal grants to state educational agencies to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act began laying the foundation work for equally opportunity education across the nation. Unfortunately, ESEA was unevenly implemented which resulted in unreliable data from its results. For example, during the span of ESEA testing Michigan had the most schools labeled as failing, about 40 percent, while Arkansas and Wyoming had none. Yet, Michigan performed above average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, while Arkansas scored near the bottom (National Center for Fair and Open Testing, 2007). This was partly due to what states individually defined as rigorous testing.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

In the 1990s, the "Standards & Accountability Movement" began in the U.S., as states began writing standards outlining (a) what students were expected to know and to be able to do at each grade level, and (b) implementing unified assessments designed to measure whether students were meeting the standards. As part of this education reform movement, the nation's governors and corporate leaders founded Achieve, Inc. in 1996, a bipartisan organization to raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability in all 50 states. In 2001, the controversial No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was approved and began its movement into every classroom across the United States. The law reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaced the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. NCLB also mandated high-stakes student testing that applies penalties to schools for low student achievement scores. While NCLB put in place measures that exposed achievement gaps among traditionally underserved students and started an important national dialogue on educational improvement: many parents, educators, and elected officials have recognized that an updated law is necessary to expand opportunity for all students in America. Opposition to No Child Left Behind claimed that the initiative did little to support schools, teachers, and principals; and to strengthen our educational system and economy.

A 2004 report, titled *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*, found that both employers and colleges are demanding more of high school graduates than in the past. This movement back to individual state guided assessments was an attempt to reach this goal. According to Achieve, Inc., "current high-school exit expectations fall well short of employer and college demands (2015)." The report explained that the major problem currently facing the American school system is that high school graduates were not provided with the skills and knowledge they needed to succeed in college and careers. "While students and their parents may still believe that the diploma reflects adequate preparation for the intellectual demands of adult life, in reality it falls far short of this common-sense goal (Achieve Inc, 2015)." The report said that the diploma itself lost its value because graduates could not compete successfully beyond high school, and that the solution to this problem is a common set of rigorous standards. In 2007, ESEA was due to be reauthorized, but few supporters stood behind all the original tenets of NCLB.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Thus came the Common Core State Standards Initiative, "a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers,"(Common Core Initiative, 2015). State education chiefs and governors in 48 states came together to develop the Common Core, a set of clear college- and career-ready standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. Over the last decade education reforms have attempted to raise the bar that all children in the United States must clear to successfully their schooling. Today, 43 states have voluntarily adopted and are working to implement the standards, which are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to take credit bearing introductory courses in two- or four-year college programs or enter the workforce. The Common Core State Standards aim to raise student achievement by standardizing what's taught in schools across the United States has sparked controversy among educators, parents and politicians. Rick Hess, a resident scholar and director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, says the Common Core standards also have roots in No Child Left Behind. The entire purpose of the standards, Hess said, was to determine what students need to know and demonstrate the ability to do in order to be prepared for an entry-level college

course. As of June 2014, 43 states, the Department of Defense Education Activity, Washington D.C., Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands have adopted the CCSS in ELA/literacy and math. They are now in the process of implementing the standards locally. The Standards use individual grade levels in kindergarten through grade 8 to provide useful specificity; the Standards use two-year bands in grades 9-12 to allow schools, districts, and states flexibility in high school course design.

Since the implementation of the Common Core, the rate at which students graduate high school has increased (edu.gov). However, do these increased rates reflect an increase in students leaving High School College ready and passing the Common Core? The Education Department notes that some states still implement requirements differently, resulting in potential differences in how rates are computed. The U.S. Department of Education computes an adjusted graduation rate for states by dividing the number of students earning a regular diploma by an "adjusted cohort" for the graduating class -- the number of ninth graders four years ago, plus students transferring in, minus those who transferred, emigrated or passed away during the four school years. The new, uniform rate calculation is not comparable in absolute terms to previously reported rates. Meaning that previous graduation requirements cannot be accurately compared to current graduation rates. Many states have redefined

what they will consider in computing their graduation rates. Oregon Department of Education has begun reporting "cohort rates," measured by tracking the number of students who enter as freshmen and receive a regular diploma four years later. This means students who received modified diplomas, who left or will leave to pursue a GED or who stayed another year to attend community college programs won't get counted as part of that graduating group. Therefore, while 26 states reported lower graduation rates and 24 states reported unchanged or increased rates under the new metric, these changes should not be viewed as measures of progress but rather as a more accurate snapshot.

State High School Graduation Rates for All Students

	2012-13 Graduation Rate	2011-12 Graduation Rate	2010-11 Graduation Rate
United States Total	81.4%	80%	79%

State High School Graduation Rates for Low Income Students

	2012-13 Graduation Rate	2011-12 Graduation Rate	2010-11 Graduation Rate
United States Total	73.3%	72%	70%

State High School Graduation Rates for Children with Disabilities

	2012-13 Graduation Rate	2011-12 Graduation Rate	2010-11 Graduation Rate
United States Total	61.9%	61%	59%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, ED Facts/Consolidated State Performance Reports

This is not solely an American problem. Applebee and Langer (2011 claim that so far there has been no systematic, large-scale examination of writing and writing instruction in the middle and high school years since A. Applebee's article in 1981. Though the United States is the focus of this study to create a clearer picture of the overall need for expansion of instruction for teachers we must look outside of ourselves to see the enormity of the problem. In England in 2003 the National commission on writing reported a lower national achievement in writing which was reflected in many American Education reports. NCW stated that "many students are producing relatively immature and unsophisticated writing," in a world demanding stronger and multidimensional skills, "Students cannot write with the skill expected of them today" (16).

Common Core State Standards in Detail:

The Common Core is a set of standards that were created with the goal to ensure that all students leave high school with the ability to communicate well—to read, write, listen, and speak in academic and non-academic contexts. The Standards are comprised of three main sections: a comprehensive K-5 section and three content area-specific sections for grades 6-12, one for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. These skills were determined a necessary to prepare students for life outside of the classroom.

According to the Oregon Department of Education, the Common Core emphasizes using evidence from texts to present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) breaks the Language Art's standards into five distinct segments: Reading Informational Texts, Reading Literature, Writing, Language, and Speaking/Listening. Each section specific standard corresponds to a career and college ready anchor standard. Together these standards give a specific and broad description respectively of the skills set to be mastered. The Writing and Language segments of the Common Core work together to support students' understanding of the use and function of the English Language. Writing standards were designed to

combine elements of different forms of writing to communicate effectively, to produce complex and nuanced writing, and create reliable fully researched articles.

Language skills are essential tools not only because they serve as the necessary basis for further learning and career development but also because they enrich the human experience and foster responsible citizenship. The purpose of the Language Arts common core is to scaffold skills each year off of the previous year and develop students' ability to communicate in a multitude of situations. Language standards were designed to show students that language is as much an art as it is rules. Separation of writing and language standards emphasizes "that language is as much a matter of craft as it is rules" requiring its own set of guiding standards. This, however, is not meant to mark level of importance among the standards as they are all inseparable in creating a complete curriculum. These standards –both for writing and language- encourage students to maneuver and understand the particular functions of language within a variety of contexts. They help students develop the ability to manipulate syntax to achieve a particular effect. The following anchor standards designed for language and writing instruction provide a broad base to the grade specific standards: (see Appendix A for list of English Language Arts standards)

Language Standards:

The Language Standards are set separately from writing and reading in order to emphasize its key concepts: conventions, knowledge of language, and vocabulary acquisition. By creating subgroups in the language standards teachers can focus on specific aspect of language and its usage. Convention standards lead students to demonstrate control over a wide array of punctuation—both required and stylistic—and require students to show command of syntactical manipulation. Knowledge of language standards exposes students to the idea of contextual language, language variations based on genre and purpose of writing. Finally the vocabulary acquisition standards don't just focus on expanding students understanding of terminology but includes various word connotations depending on content.

Writing Standards:

Writing standards focus heavily on the different text types and purposes of writing that students will be asked to complete through the course of their education. Much like the language standards, the writing standards are broken into subgroups. Text types and purposes lays out the various genres of writing students will complete. Production and Distribution outlines the development, editing, and technology use involved in the writing process to create full and

cohesive works. Range of writing is designed to encourage students to practice writing both long thought-out papers as well as short impromptu pieces in an organized and purposeful manner. All three of these subgroups contain at least on standard that references using stylistic language choices for audience guided writing. This reflects the knowledge of language standards goal to expose students to language variations based on genre and purpose of writing.

The Standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language is a shared responsibility within the school meaning that each skill is emphasized across disciplines. Part of the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy conveyed by the Standards is extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. The Standards are not alone in calling for a special emphasis on informational text. The 2009 reading framework of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) requires a high and increasing proportion of informational text on its assessment as students advance through the grades stressing the Importance of these texts in college and career readiness. In K-5, the Standards followed NAEP's lead in balancing the reading of literature with the reading of informational texts, including texts in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Fulfilling the Standards for 6-12 ELA requires much

greater attention to a specific category of informational text—literary nonfiction—than has been traditional. Standards do not dictate what is to specifically be taught and several standards can be addressed by a single richly developed task.

The purposes of the standards are to develop skills and layer knowledge so that while students progress from year to year the information from the previous year acts as a foundation for the current school year. But, rather than asking students questions they can answer solely from their prior knowledge and experience, the standards call for students to answer questions that depend on their having read the texts with care. Students must be immersed in information about the world around them if they are to develop the strong general knowledge and vocabulary they need to become successful readers and be prepared for college, career, and life. Educational proficiencies are the learning goals for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Educational standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful, while also helping parents understand what is expected of their children.

To support the year to year scaffolding of skills demanded by the Common Core State standards the Common Core initiative created the language progressive skills. The progressive skill is a separate document developed to place

emphasis on deepening language knowledge and usage as essential components to building language knowledge and not just accidental byproducts of exposure to an academic environment (see appendix B). In other words, the progressive skills standards direct and differentiated instruction matched to grade appropriate sophistication. Each of these skills are meant to be mastered at an introductory level no later than the end of the grade in which they are introduced within the Common Core. In successive grades, as students writing and speaking become more sophisticated, students will learn to apply these skills through in more advanced means. The standards are flexed over the course of a student's career to expand the breadth of knowledge in an area and deepen understanding of a given skill. According to the School Improvement Network (2015) organizing the progress language skills across specific grades and "building knowledge systematically in English language arts is like giving children various pieces of a puzzle in each grade that, over time, will form one big picture".

Brief history of Language/Grammar Instruction:

No other issue has so consumed theorists and practitioners alike as much as the grammar debate. The history of language instruction is in a sense the narration of arguments for and against the teaching of grammar. Connors (1986) traces the history of grammar as it rises from the American Revolution, is revived by the Civil War and begins to solidify with 'rhetorical revolution'.

Shortly after the American Revolution, began a rise of the vernacular English. Language instruction focused on defining a unified 'proper' American English through error hunting and terminology memorization. American English grammar instruction replaced Greek and Latin instruction that had been traditionally taught in schools. This form of language instruction was purely prescriptive, praising the correct and criticizing the improper and dealt very little with composing essays. In fact grammar became so much a part of education that "elementary schools became known as grammar schools" (Connors, 1986).

The Civil War saw a shift of pedagogy that turned away from error-hunting and towards creative composition. This shift attempted to create a synthesis between rhetoric and grammar in language instruction, focusing grammar instruction on the act of writing. Yet, instruction remained formalized and failed to mimic communication skills as they really existed. From 1870 through 1920 language instruction was largely driven by the standards passed down by Harvard

as the 'correct' English. Highly held colleges saw a lack in their students' knowledge of language which resulted in a massive overhaul in language instruction. To close the gap between colleges expected language knowledge and students ability teachers turned to a very prescriptive approach that refocused language instruction of the correct grammar usage for preferred English.

With continued displeasure in the production of writing and language understanding in 1935 Language instruction and the field of Linguistics made their first true interaction. But this was short lived, linguistics quickly moved towards the scientific while English instruction moved towards communicative functions of language (Connors, 1986)

There are several different approaches commonly associated with the linguistic aspect of language instruction. Before the mid 20th century grammar analysis and instruction contained mainly sentence structure examination. Structural theorists emphasize the process of segmenting and classifying the physical features of sentences (Abushibab 302). Structuralism was concerned with the stimuli-response relationship in grammar, believing grammar is acquired through habits of practice and repetition of the nine basic patterns of possible combinations using noun phrases, verbs; linking or transitive, adjectives, and prepositions, in which all English sentences can be broken down and understood. This form of analysis left little room for a functional description of language.

Many linguistics saw limitations of structural language analysis and transformed their approach.

Ever since American language instruction has been largely dominated and shaped by the research and pedagogy of Noam Chomsky, a leader in linguistics who published most of his work in 1950-60's. The bulk of Chomsky's work falls within a school of linguistics called transformational-generative grammar. This theory states one of the most important qualities of Chomsky's theoretical framework establishes that language is a cognitive ability or innate meaning that the knowledge that underlies the human ability to speak and understand language is not learned but already resides within our being, it is a natural skill every individual has. Following this theory an infant has the capacity to have a large body of prior knowledge about the properties of language in general, and would need to only actually *learn* the specific features of the language(s) it is exposed to. Terms such as "transformation" can give the impression that theories of transformational generative grammar are intended as a model for the processes through which the human mind is able learn how to constructs and understands sentences. According to Chomsky, all sentences are generated through specific rules of structure. These create the underlying (deep) structure which is changed to the surface structure (what we actually say) through transformational rules.

A key component of transformational-generative grammar is its division of syntax (the sentence structure) and semantics (the meaning or role of words within the sentence). According to Chomsky's theory on linguistics it is possible for a sentence to be both grammatical and meaningless, as in Chomsky's famous example "colorless green ideas sleep furiously. This sentence would be seen as syntactically/grammatically correct but is semantically anomalous. Many words are playing contradicting roles within the sentence 'colorless' and 'green' are contradictory much like 'roared' and 'silently'. This separation between syntax and semantics was just the tip of the iceberg in the growing division in linguistics.

At the 1968 Dartmouth Conference marked a paradigm shift in the way in which educators viewed language, specifically writing instruction. At some point according to Conner (1985) between 1870 and 1900, the teacher as commentator on the general communicative success of a piece of student writing and content-was succeeded by a simplified concept: the teacher as spotter and corrector of formal errors. With swelling dissatisfaction (Braddock 1963) in current writing instruction many educators changed the focus from the product of writing --often taught through worksheets and error hunting-- to the process of writing, the syntactical choices to create a cohesive paper. In other words, instead of emphasizing the end product teachers began to focus on the purpose and language choices that contributed to the final product and the context in

which the writing was created. The suggestion that "successful communication and not mere grammatical correctness was the central aim of writing" was according to Conner, a "novel and exciting concept to English scholars of this time."

Following the path laid out at the Dartmouth Conference a faction of linguists with the lead of Michael Halliday worked to create a connection between context of situations with language and culture rather than try to develop a set of rule that are constructed subconsciously. The result: Systemic functional linguistics (SFL). This pedagogical approach has been called a dynamic description of language in use (DSE, 1988, p3). Systemic functional linguistics looks to go beyond transformational grammar and the rules guiding language to developing an understanding how language works. For Halliday, a central theoretical principle is that any act of communication involves choices. Language is a system, and the choices available in any language variety are determined by the context. In other words, systemic functional linguistics analyzes how language choices evolve under the pressure of the particular functions. What may work grammatically in one context may be considered odd or inappropriate in another. When creating a scientific report a writer would most likely use longer noun phrases as the subject with simple verbs, "*The cranberry fruit worm, acrobasis vaccinii Riley*, is…" the context of a scientific paper describing new information

determines the linguistics choices. Unfortunately, students often miss these nuances; their analytical report writing in science often mirrors their literary analysis or even creative papers. The language choices that semantically separate the functions of writing are often left out of instruction.

Bridging the two schools of linguistic studies--structural and systemic functional-- the Common Core Language and Writing standards attempt to analyze individual aspects and nuances of the language as well as explores how phrases, context, and connotation create complex works. It pushes students to begin to adjust the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. The language requirements within the Common Core of all subjects require cognitively- and linguistically-complex academic applications in which the curriculum is broken down into isolated aspects of language. William Rutherford (1987) referred to this strategy as “accumulated entities,” that are addressed in some sequential order, much like the grade staggered organization of the Common Core.

What is the Grammar definition we are working with?

Before going any further we must define what we mean when speaking of grammar. For many linguists grammar is a term that refers to the set of rules that humans internalize to understand to produce and comprehend language. For this purpose the terms knowledge about language (KAL) and grammar will be used interchangeably as grammar in part of fully understanding of language. Many people remember-- with a grimace-- grammar from their own educational careers. When talking about English instruction many instructors choose to use knowledge about language instead of knowledge about grammar because the word language implies more of learner-centered perspective while the word grammar implies an outside view of English that places control or blame. The key when speaking about English is to avoid the "particular values and standards the idea of grammar has stood to symbolize" (Cameron, 1995, 82). The traditional view of grammar teaching was and in many cases still is prescriptive, that is it identifies a strict set of correct facts and lists what should be taught (Bullock Report DES 1975, 173).

Clearly defining grammar and how it shapes the understanding of language is an important aspect of teaching composition and identifying which aspects of language are focused on. Hartwell built his definition off of a previous study by Nelson Francis (1954) "The Three Meanings of Grammar". Furthering

this, Hartwell explores several other popular definitions. Hartwell's distinct so far is a widely accepted and has been tweaked by many others looking to find a concrete definition of grammar.

Hartwell (1985) analyzed a multitude of grammar definitions and created a culminating list of the five meanings of "Grammar". Hartwell first defines grammar as "the set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings." He claims that it is not necessary to discuss these patterns in order to be able to use them. These are the natural patterns that many native speakers pick up subconsciously. This definition of grammar explains why a small child learning spoken English says "I goed to the store," not because this was ever taught to them but they have picked up that the 'ed' sound means that it happened in the past. Chomsky called this innate language knowledge.Christie Frances defines this form of grammar as the principle in which language structures and orders information, creates clauses and texts (234). Frances' definition focuses on strict rules that lay out ways which we create language such as subject-verb agreements, and the use of punctuation. This explanation of knowledge of language can be used to teach and explain Standard English it falls short in developing a students' understands of language; it lacks the ability to clarify or describe the creative decisions writers may make. Kolln calls for a careful definition of the word grammar- "the internalized system

that native speakers of a language share" (p. 140) she concludes with a call to place grammar instruction at the center of the composition curriculum: "our goal should be to help students understand the system they know unconsciously as native speakers, to … enable them to think about and talk about their language" (p. 150).

According to Hartwell the second meaning of "grammar" is "the branch of linguistic science which is concerned with the description, analysis, and formulation of formal language patterns." Susan Losse Nunan in her article “Teaching Grammar in the New Millennium” claims that grammar means the syntactical choices writers and speakers make, including punctuation. This definition focuses more on the colloquial or daily and regional use of language. Just as gravity was in full operation before Newton's apple fell, so grammar in the first sense was in full operation before anyone formulated the first rule that began the history of grammar as a study.

The third sense in which Hartwell claims people use the word "grammar" is "linguistic etiquette." The word “grammar” in this sense is often coupled with a derogatory adjective: we say that the expression "he ain't here" is "bad grammar." This is the form of prescriptive grammar instruction that many people have experienced. One hears a good deal of criticism of teachers of English couched in such terms as "they don't teach grammar anymore." The fourth

definition of grammar that Hartwell plays with is defined as "school grammar," quite literally meaning "the grammars used in the schools," the traditional, non-scientific, Latin-based grammatical approach that schools have taught for generations. For example the rule which indicate possession by adding ‘s or s’ to nouns. The school grammar approach classifies a sentence fragment as a conceptual error leaving no room for stylistic writing. Worse yet, the rules laid out by "the common school grammars" Hartwell states this form of grammar is unconnected with anything remotely resembling literate adult behavior. In other words, the rules we teach do not reflect our actual understanding of language.

It is worth separating out, as still another meaning of grammar, what Hartwell calls Grammar 5, "stylistic grammar," defined as "grammatical terms used in the interest of teaching prose style," understanding and identifying the different uses of active and passive voice. Understanding the wide range of language usage is vital but some critique this definition calling it limited, others state that the importance of regional syntactical influences should not be put above the study of Standard English.

Gleason, in his definition, turns away from the focus how to define grammar and focuses instead on how we use it much like Hartwell’s Grammar 5. A related aspect of knowledge of language that is widely lost in current curriculum is the sociolinguistic --cultural and contextual-- knowledge of

language. Gleason states that to understand grammar, we first need to focus on the characteristics of the units not the definitions (119). Understanding language means looking into how the context of a situation drives the linguistic structure and realizing that it is the world that drives language not language driving the world. Grammar changes in its function and its stylistic roles depending on the purpose it needs to achieve. "Nothing is more blighting," wrote Mills, "to natural and functional written communication than an excessive zeal for purity of usage in mechanics." Shifting the focus away from the rules of grammar and to the role of it however, has it critics. Some people say that these new 'definitions' are just that, "definitions that do not define" (Gleason 119).

Research Method:

The goal of this study is not to challenge any method of grammar/language instruction but to objectively report and analyze the expanding requirements of language knowledge of both teachers and students. A comprehensive study including teacher surveys reveals clearer connections between teacher knowledge and growing language requirements. Exploration of teacher and student language awareness will create a base of common knowledge on which to deconstruct the State Standards into its basic requirements. Each Common Core standard is packed into multifaceted unit that actually contain a several step process that teachers must unpack or deconstruct. Comparing language awareness/confidence and the demands of the CCSS will hopefully reveal the gap in which many teachers, and in turn students, fall.

The main fallback of conducting the study in this fashion is the fact that it leaves out the students hands on manipulation of language aspect. To further the results found in this study an accumulative case study following students as they traverse the education system and develop their language understanding would paint a more accurate picture of students understanding how language functions in different contexts.

Controversy

The Braddock report marked one of the greatest controversies in language/grammar instruction. The three year study by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer was tailor-made by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) to answer one question: Does grammar instruction have any impact on student writing? What they found in the results of their study breathed life into a long forgotten debate. The Baddock report (1963) concluded that grammar instruction was "useless if not harmful" to the teaching of writing. And for many teachers, that was the end of that. But for those teacher who were not ready to throw in the towel on language instruction it was only the beginning. Many claimed that the Braddock report wasn't carefully applied: its argument was actually that: "The teaching of *formal grammar* has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in *actual composition*[hands on practice], even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing" (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer, 1963). In other words, teaching students to "Diagram sentences …{and} teaching nothing beyond the ability to diagram," does nothing to develop students knowledge about language (Thoreson, 2011).

Simply put, instruction can either be direct (explicit/formal) or indirect (implicit). Explicit instruction is generally teacher-centered, meaning that the teacher directs the students' learning. Explicit instruction is vital for initial instruction in skill acquisition (National Reading Panel Report, 2000). 'Explicit instruction means the teacher states clearly what is being taught and models effectively out this word. Explicit instruction

ensures students' attention is drawn to important features of an example or demonstration.

Implicit instruction is characterized by activities that guide students to forming connections for learning. Implicit instruction is important when generalizing skills to other contexts where the teacher can simply present the information or problem to the student and allows the student to make their own conclusions and create their own conceptual structures and assimilate the information in the way that makes the most sense to them. When using implicit instruction techniques, the teacher serves as a guide or facilitator for learning, establishing learning environments and materials conducive to student-generated learning.

So which method of instruction is more effective? A Vanderbilt University study recently looked into this question. Subjects previously identified as excellent readers showed little difference between how they processed explicit vs. implicit instruction. Average readers, on the other hand, showed through their MRIs that they had to work harder to learn through implicit instruction; for them, explicit instruction was the more effective method. In a study conducted by Nastaran Nazari in Iran (2013) two classes were chosen for teaching the targeted structure (present perfect) through opposing methods of instruction. The results indicated that the group which received explicit instruction outperformed the participants in the implicit group in both productive (creating the asked for syntactic structure) and receptive modes (identifying the designated grammatical structure). The findings support the importance of metalinguistic awareness in language learning, which is the understanding that language

is a system of communication, bound to rules, and forms the basis for the ability to discuss different ways to use language (Baten, Hofman, & Loeys, 2011). The result showed that for the chosen grammar point, students who were taught under the explicit conditions generally outperformed those who had been exposed to implicit presentation of the grammar structure.

The assumption surrounding the current era of education reform is that if it can be taught then is can be assessed. Knowledge of language is teachable and through the Common Core State Standards it is assessed. However many critics claim that the degree to which these standards are covered varies and holding all students responsible for the same level of achievement does little justice for their language understanding. For many students the varied instruction may have little to no impact in their understanding of language. Students who have had rich experiences with language at an early age either through access to literature or parental guidance will naturally develop fluent and complex sentences through exposure to mentor texts, multiple texts in a specific genre. However, even these students will not fully understand how to manipulate grammatical elements to achieve a precise style on their own solely through language exposure but would gain a general understanding. This means that students who lack access to a wide range of literature and don't experience a variety of structure have even less knowledge about language before they enter the classroom and risk being left even further behind. As a justice to their students, teachers must make these experiences available to all students through the use of mentor texts; these are various

texts within the form of writing being analyzed at the time that serve as examples of how proper writing should look.

Looking again at result of explicit instruction a study complete by Green, O'Donovan and Sutton in the United Kingdom (2003) showed that children's written sentence structures improve immensely between 1995-2002 covering the period immediately after the introduction of the national literacy standards, the United Kingdom's equivalent of the Common Core, which recommends explicit instruction about sentence structures. Merely explaining a rule doesn't necessarily lead to full understanding of the language composition. It is preferable to let students explore the rules through a balance of implicit and explicit instruction. A grammar-discovery approach involves providing learners with data to illustrate a particular grammatical aspect through explicit instruction and allowing them to analyze, and manipulate the language to reach an awareness of how the feature works in a variety of situations.

What Knowledge about Language do teachers have?

Many teachers are unaware of, or are misinformed about the precise elements of language that they are expected to fully teach through the Common Core. The recent changes to the Common Core has placed new emphasis on knowledge about language bringing it to the foreground of classroom curriculum and has brought to light the gap between teacher knowledge and their confidence in the classroom (Derewianka, 2012). Many teachers report feeling confident in their understanding of grammar but lack the confidence in their ability to teach the material. Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie (2005) illustrated in their survey that teachers recognized the importance of explicit teaching of sentence structure but the survey also showed that many teachers expressed hesitation in describing how to explain the concepts. Many teachers were more comfortable describing punctuation over more abstract concepts like sentence structure.

A recent study out of the University of Tennessee (2015) has shown that the most commonly marked mistakes on students papers are commas, apostrophes, and sentence fragments. These mistakes are also the more convenient mistakes for an impromptu mini lesson to explain. Teachers who lack confidence in their own knowledge of language compensate by stressing the basic concepts that they feel they have mastered. This means that many teachers address grammar purely as correctness of punctuation and spelling instead of

seeing 'the grammatical features of written standard English to structure a wide range of sentence types for particular purposes and effect' (Myhill 2012). It is important to note that correctness of punctuation and understanding language structure are two very different concepts. Correct language structure includes but is not limited to the use of passive and active voice, variation in sentence openings, and nominalization of verbs to create abstract and complex sentences. Punctuation alone does not ensure a solid knowledge of language. Explanation of the intricacies of word play and modeling of grammar terminology within sentences should replace error hunting.

Another source of tension in language instruction is the categorization of "useful" and "unwarranted" aspect of language. Through an attempt to develop students writing skills schools have adopted the "drill and kill" approach for basic punctuation, verb tense, and language patterns but often have left out an a deeper explanation of language manipulation and the variety of roles that words can play in different contexts. For example, in scientific articles verbs are nominalized —changed to play the role of a noun—to compact information into noun phrase and create abstract meanings. Reflecting back onto secondary education, teachers reported feeling a basic understanding of language before beginning teaching high school but upon entering the high school classroom felt confined to more "useful" aspects of language.

Courses provided in teacher licensing programs are often insufficient in content regarding knowledge of language: covering a wide breadth of material but not providing the depth or explanation to enable future teachers to learn the material and apply the concepts into their own curriculum. U.S. Department of Education reported that grammatically correct writing is essential. Students are required to understand and show mastery in the conventions of standard American English; this includes basic grammar usage, punctuation, and spelling, knowledge of language and the varieties of usage dependant on context and social situations. Louden (2005) questions the quality of content of teacher education programs around the world and whether or not they prepare beginning teachers to teach literacy. Hislam and Cajkler (2006) examined several teacher preparation programs throughout England and concluded that many pre-service teachers who are taught explicit grammar are given adequate time to internalize the information and create connections before they are expected to teach the material or are exited from the program.

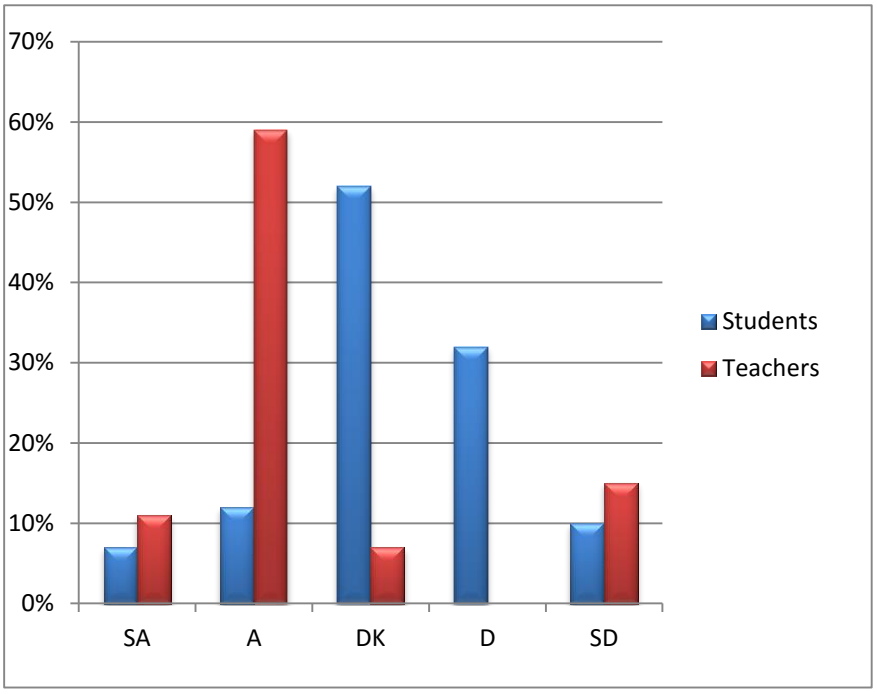
True professionalism in language instruction comes from a deeper knowledge of content and skills required in the standards that students are nationally held to. Exploring a link between teacher knowledge about language and students' knowledge about language at the time that they enter college revealed several correlations. To compare teacher knowledge about language

with student knowledge about language a study was conducted at Western Oregon University. The student survey was conducted by Cornelia Paraskevas and a teacher survey was conducted by Dr. LeJeune, Dr. Paraskevas, and Dr. Smiles. The students who participated in the survey were students attending Western Oregon University enrolled in an Introduction to Linguistics course (Ling 315). The majority of students (60) enrolled in the class were pre-service teachers; the course is a requirement at Western Oregon University for entering the College of Education. There were 6 non-teaching majors. The survey/questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the term to determine students' knowledge of language coming into college. The teachers that completed the survey/questionnaire were practicing teachers in area schools (K-12) who were participating in a grant on strengthening literacy. The survey contained several statements about language which participants were asked to score on a scale.

SA (Strongly agree): You are absolutely sure about the accuracy/truth of the statement.
A (Agree): You are fairly confident about the accuracy/truth of the statement
DK (Don't Know): You don't have an opinion about the statement partly because you don't know the terms used.
D (Disagree): You believe the statement is inaccurate/wrong.
SD (Strongly disagree): You know for sure that the statement is wrong/inaccurate.

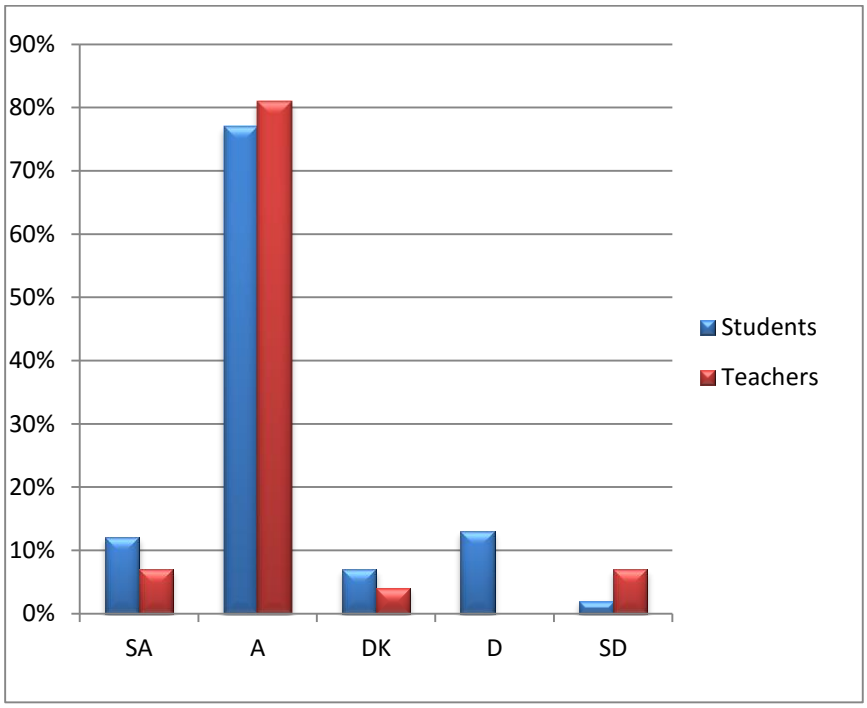
Understanding basic concepts:

Statement: *The best definition of a sentence is a complete thought*



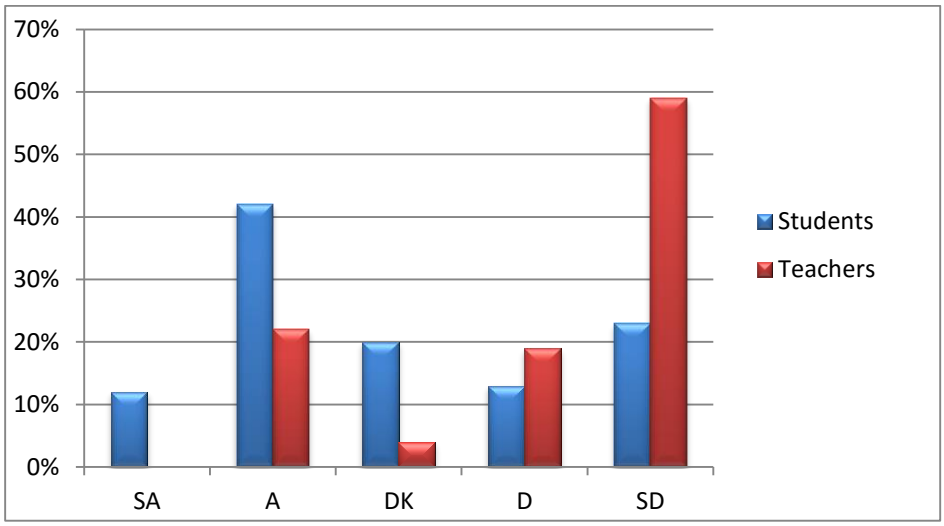
Results: Both students and teachers had a wide array of answers showing the lack of uniform in the understanding of what constitutes a sentence. 31 out of 60 students recorded do not know when asked to define a sentence while 16 out of 27 teachers agreed that this statement was true.

Statement: *The definition "a verb is an action or state of being word" is accurate"*



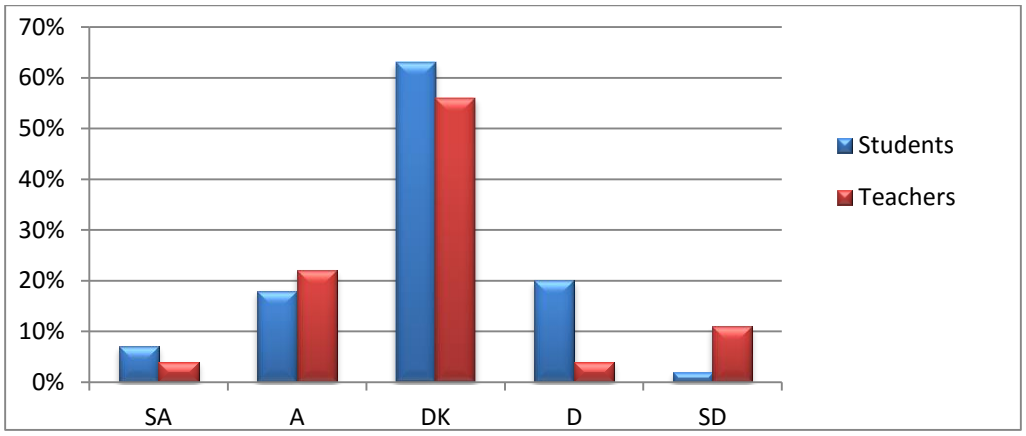
Results: Both the majority of teachers and students agreed that this statement is an accurate description. The correlation between teacher knowledge of language and students' knowledge of language is revealed here. The ratio of students and teachers reporting answers at each level of the scale is equal. This shows how teacher confidence is mimicked in their students.

Statement: *Written sentences cannot begin with the words 'but,' 'and,' or 'because.'*



Results: This statement received the greatest difference in answers between the teachers and the students. 25 of the 60 students surveyed agreed that you cannot begin a sentence with 'and' 'but' or 'because'. Yet 16 of the 27 teachers surveyed strongly disagreed with this statement. That raises the question how did this disconnect between teacher and student expectations. With the majority of teachers accepting sentences with these openers one would assume students should have a similar attitude. Somehow disconnect between teacher knowledge and student knowledge has become apparent in the appropriate openers for sentences and the situations that may call for such openings. For example a sentence may start with these openers in a literature report but not in a project proposal.

Statement: *Verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs cannot be accurately defined on the basis of their meaning.*



Results: Defining the basic terminology of language commonly used in classroom instruction revealed the lack of confidence that Beverly Derewianka (2012) referenced in her article 'Knowledge about Language'. Both students and teachers were unsure if these terms could be accurately defined off of the commonly taught definitions or if there was a more functional way to describe the functionality of the term. There is often no description of how adjectives may enhance writing in formal grammar instruction. Educators can only help students understand links in language if they provide students with proper examples.

The Common Core employs the same terminology virtually all grammatical descriptions have used but now requires knowledge to go further and asks students to be able to talk about the function of the adverb or verb in the specific sentence.

Common Core Breakdown:

Not only are there documented gaps in teacher knowledge for teaching language, we also see these gaps are accompanied by teachers' inaccurate perception of what they need to know. The language standards include the "rules" of Standard American English but they also approach language as a matter of craft and informed choice among a list of alternatives. The vocabulary subgroup of the language standards focus on understanding words and phrases, their relationship to other words in the sentence and their multiple meanings (connotation). The vocabulary standards also focus on acquiring new vocabulary, particularly general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. Vocabulary acquisition goes beyond learning new words and phrases. It includes learning the morphology-- the study and description of how words are formed in language. Vocabulary acquisition involves understanding the affixes and prefixes that words can accept.

Deepening the sense of what knowledge of language entails the breakdown of the Common Core shows how teachers are asked to develop students' knowledge about language through the Common Core. There are two standards that specifically pertain to students' knowledge about language and their ability to apply their knowledge to understand how language functions in a multitude of contexts. "The language standards include the 'rules' of SAE but

they also approach language as a matter of craft and informed choice among alternatives. The vocabulary standards focus on understanding words and phrases, their relationships, and their nuances, and on acquiring new vocabulary, particularly general academic and domain-specific words and phrases (CCSS, 2015)." Students are pushed to realize that there are finer characteristics necessary for an accurate description of language. Additionally, students are guided to develop conscious understanding of strategies for analyzing language in terms of larger units. Students must determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts and consulting reference materials; acquire and use a range of academic and domain-specific words and phrases. The Language and Convention standards in the Common Core details higher-order concepts that if met will develop "college ready" students.

Writing and language are categorized as independent standards of assessment in the Common Core and it could be easy to assume that this means that they are to be considered separate in designing curriculum. This assumption would be misleading the Department of Education notes that "the inclusion of Language standards in their own strand should not be taken as an indication that skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary are unimportant to reading writing and listening; indeed, they are inseparable from

such contexts." Though the Common Core Standards do not directly correlate writing and language standards it is possible to align language-level to connect standards to tasks (Aull, 2015). In the following table, possible language and writing connections as well as language breakdown of the standards creates patterns which highlight possible relationships between instruction, assessment, and writing tasks.

English Language Arts Common Core Career Readiness Anchor Standards:

Language

Standard	Deconstruction of Standard	Language Skills Required
Conventions of Standard English:	Conventions of Standard English (command of the conventions of SE grammar, usage, punctuation and spelling.)	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	-Recognize and describe the key differences between how grammar is used in both writing and speaking. - Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.	Use common, proper , possessive N; personal, possessive, indefinite pronouns; verbs to convey tense; determiners; adjectives conjunctions

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	-Understand proper capitalization of proper nouns and sentence openers. -Understand and demonstrate mastery of a wide variety of punctuation usage driven by language function. - Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words. - Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.	Use punctuation for effect, show an understanding or both required and stylistic choice in punctuation. End marks (. /?/!) Sentence combining ,/:/;/--
Knowledge of Language:	Knowledge of language: apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices	-Identify different contexts of language usage (scientific research, literary, personal, and formal) - Understand the conventions traditionally	-Comprehension of different register and genre specific language usage through analysis of mentor texts of any given field.

for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	associated to each context (number of verbs, adjectives, and nouns, nominalization)	
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:	Vocabulary acquisition and use (determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts and consulting reference materials; acquire and use a range of academic and domain-specific words and phrases)	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.	- infer word meaning through understanding of morphemes; smaller units within a word (*ex. In-come-ing*) -infer word meaning or connotation of a word through the topic of discourse or supporting words -infer more nuanced levels of meaning (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical). -Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.	Morpheme and Phoneme patterns common to Standard English • Morpheme: the smallest meaningful unit within a word (Educat-ed) (un-lady-like) • Phoneme: the distinct units of sound that distinguish one word from another (P-a-d, B-a-d)
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5	-Explain the meaning of simple similes (e.g., as	Connotation: the implied meaning or feeling of a

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.	pretty as a picture) and metaphors (e.g., The classroom was a zoo) in context. -Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs. -Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms). - Recognize both the connotation and denotation of words.	word (home a warm and safe place) Denotation: the literal and concrete meaning of a word (home a structure in which people live)
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.6 Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.	- Acquire new and wide ranging vocabulary - Recognize the difference between general and domain-specific words. - Recognize the difference between language used and skills required for writing, listening, speaking, and reading - Independently expand vocabulary and utilize context clues (see CCSS 5) to determine meaning of new and unfamiliar terms. - Differential between domain or context specific words,	Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English and situations where informal discourse is appropriate.

	academic language, and everyday language.

* Standards were provided by: The Common Core Initiative 2015

English Language Arts College and Career Readiness Standards:
Writing

Text Types and Purposes:	Deconstruction of Standards	Language Skills
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	- Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence - Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each remaining unbiased and anticipating the audience's knowledge level. - Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion. - Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone associated with the context. - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows conventional structure and supports the argument presented cohesively.	-Linking words and phrases. -Subordinating clauses -Varied sentence length

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	-Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. -Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic	Recognize the verb: noun usage in this genre of writing. Relative pronouns; progressive; modals; order of adjectives; prepositional phrases
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.	-Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters or events. -Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection,	-use narrative techniques such as dialogue, description and pacing; -use a variety of transitional words, phrases and clauses to manage the sequence of events; use concrete words, phrases and sensory detail -Explain the function of conjunctions,

	and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. -Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.	prepositions, interjections in general and in specific sentences. Perfect verb forms; use tense for time sequence; correlatives (either…or, etc.)
Production and Distribution of Writing:		
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	- Develop, organize, and create style which is appropriate for the task, purpose, and audience. - Recognize the difference between required language convention and stylistic choices.	Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.	-Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual appropriate for the discipline and writing type	Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6	- Demonstrate the ability to use a	N/A

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.	multitude of technologies effectively to produce and publish writing. - Work collaboratively and constructively with other individuals to improve quality of writing

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	-Determine what reliable research is considering sources in gathering information. - Maintained focused writing guided by an essential question
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.	- Demonstrate the ability to correctly site evidence from a multitude of reliable sources. - Follow appropriate citation forms dependant on the context - Recognize the difference in citation conventions in writing.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from	-Recognize important or key concepts in written texts and speech.

literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	-Demonstrate the ability to reflect and analyze information gathered into personal thoughts.	

Range of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Demonstrate the ability to write in both short and long time frames to include research, drafting, collaborative editing, revisions, and rewriting. -Demonstrate the ability to organize thoughts and write cohesively in short time frames. -Vary syntax for a given range of tasks and purposes with audience knowledge in mind.	Recognize inappropriate person/number shifts in pronouns; variations from standard written English; vary sentence patterns for meaning and style.

The examples used above were drawn from the Common Core initiative and research completed on grade-level appropriate language patterns conducted by Dr. Paraskevas. The above table breaks down and deconstructs the language of the Common Core into the specific steps required to successfully master each standard. This deconstruction shows how packed standards are multifaceted that require specific and diverse language knowledge. The chart in Appendix D shows the forms and functions of grammar necessary for language instruction. Knowledge of the forms of language is the understanding of syntactic frames in

which words play and the meaning that affixes carry. The function of language focuses on the position of individual phrases in the construction of sentences.

Results/Discussion

What do teachers need to know to teach what is required:

According to Myhill (2005) the ultimate goal for any teacher of Language Arts is not accuracy but effectiveness in both knowledge about language and the writing process. Teachers need to be comfortable in deconstructing standards into their main components and identify the correlation between the writing process-- the social construction of knowledge, a variety of postmodernisms, peer feedback, multiple drafting, portfolio assessment-- and language usage. Rather than use grammar instruction as a way to mark errors and judge a student's correctness of language use, teachers should identify the language choices students make, why students may have made those choices, and whether or not those choices may be effective. Students can only create what they can envision and have a model to consult. Yet teachers often give general assignments with no examples and no previous grammar instruction. Many people remember being handed a 'correction' worksheet filled with sentences and being told that there were errors but not knowing where to start. What did these said errors look like and why were they errors? Students are told to add adjectives to their writing but are not given explanation to what adding adjectives can do to their writing or where specifically adjectives can be added within a sentence. When asked to provide their peers with feedback, editors are

just as lost about language function as the student writers, partly because their knowledge of grammatical terminology and grammatical concepts in the context of writng was incomplete and because in an environment where correctness is determined as minor matters, only punctuation and spelling or “mere surface error”, they had little motivation to expend much effort on such things.

Each year students are expected to demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language yet, the National Commission on Writing (2003) claimed that “most students today cannot write with the skill expected of them” in today’s work force.

To ensure students receive instruction that integrates all aspects of the Common Core and addresses the whole of language knowledge required teachers must move away from the formal grammar practice of sentence correcting worksheets. Displaced sentences held out of context leaves students with little information about how the sentence should be read. Decontextualized examples of language often lead to misconceptions about language usage. NCW (2003) insists that the main issue is not basic writing but rather that students cannot write well. Accuracy of punctuation does not ensure great writing. The truth is that teaching grammar knowledge in a positive contextualized way that makes clear links with writing is not yet an established way of teaching (DfES 1998). Exploring situational contexts in which language usage must vary to

domain specific conventions. If students are able to compare and contrast the variety of English language used for discourse and can identify the language differences then they will be better prepared for writing within any genre. Teaching students how to choose words and phrases for effect; recognize the difference between speech and writing better prepares them for the writing demands inside and outside the classroom. Teachers must be aware of the accuracy of the support material chosen for their lessons. If teachers are aware of the specific CCSS elements and the language components required by each standard then teachers will be able to work syntactic and semantic components into their lessons. The knowledge of language required of teachers outlined in the Common Core shows the depth of understanding of both grammatical correctness and language roles teachers need to be able to explain to their students. Generally speaking, when learners are informed of the grammatical rules, they feel more comfortable, self-confident and motivated in the classroom. It would be wise for educators pay attention to this fact and take cautious measures in planning grammar teaching strategies. The grammar chart in Appendix D shows teachers how to breakdown the affixes which different parts of speech can accept and the language frames in which the given aspect of language functions (its roles). It is important for students to understand why

specific words are positioned where they are within a sentence or clause and the possibilities for language choices within a sentence.

International Answers

At the Akdeniz Language studies Conference in Turkey, Nazari presented her results from her study on language instruction in Iran. Nazari conducted a wide scale analysis of language instruction comparing how the two methods of instruction (implicit and explicit) might affect the learners' achievement in both receptive and productive modes.

Two recent large-scale reviews of writing research in the US (Graham and Perin, 2007) and in England (Andrews et al, 2006) both argue that there is evidence of the effectiveness of sentence combining practices, creating complex sentence through various combining strategies. Graham and Perin claim that 'teaching adolescents how to write increasingly complex sentences in this way enhances the quality of their writing' (2007:18). Research examined in these two studies consistently highlighted the value of grammar taught in the context of writing. Studies out of the United States and England stressed language instruction that takes into account either: the context of the linguistic demands of a particular style of writing, or the knowledge of language needs of specific students.

However, in terms of introducing writers to the linguistic characteristics of multiple genres or styles of writing, Australia is the forerunner. Beverly Derewianka and Frances Christie (2001; 2009) represent a movement of

developing writers and writing at the focal point of curriculum. Pedagogically Australian Language and grammar instruction is based on “developing metalinguistic awareness at lexical, syntactic and textual levels” (Myhill, 2005) Internationally researchers stress using grammar as a tool to illuminate students understanding of how texts work as independent entities and can contribute to the overall structure of a genre. This work has been very influential in the primary English curriculum in England.

National Curriculum (2007) inspects how explicitly showing students how different ways of shaping sentences or texts, and how different choices of words can generate different possibilities for meaning-making. The goal of this approach is to encourage writers to take control and ownership of the texts they compose and be confidence in their language choices. Students need to confidently make choices which enable them to voice themselves in their writing through stylistic choices, and to shape texts to meet their rhetorical goals. This notion reiterates using grammar instruction to identify the language choices students make, why students may have made those choices, and whether or not those choices may be effective.

Appendix A: The Common Core

Common Core State Standards Initiative
English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

The K-12 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.
Standards in this strand:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.5	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10

Text Types and Purposes[1]:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.5
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6
Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8
Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Note on range and content in student writing

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. They develop the capacity to build knowledge on a subject through research projects and to respond analytically to literary and informational sources. To meet these goals, students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year.

[1] These broad types of writing include many subgenres. See Appendix A for definitions of key writing types.

Common Core State Standards Initiative

English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language

The K-12 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

Standards in this strand:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.6

Conventions of Standard English:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different

contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.6

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Note on range and content of student language use

To build a foundation for college and career readiness in language, students must gain control over many conventions of Standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as learn other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively. They must also be able to determine or clarify the meaning of grade-appropriate words encountered through listening, reading, and media use; come to appreciate that words have non-literal meanings, shadings of meaning, and

relationships to other words; and expand their vocabulary in the course of studying content. The inclusion of Language standards in their own strand should not be taken as an indication that skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary are unimportant to reading, writing, speaking, and listening; indeed, they are inseparable from such contexts.

Appendix B: Progressive Skills

Standard	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9-10	Grade 11-12
L.3.1f. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.								
L.3.a. Choose words and phrases for effect.								
L.3.3a. Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.								
L.4.1g. Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., *to/too/two; there/their*).								
L.4.3a. Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.[1]								
L.4.3b. Choose punctuation for effect.								
L.5.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.								
L.5.2a. Use punctuation to separate items in a series.[2]								

Standard	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9-10	Grade 11-12
L.6.1c. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.								
L.6.1d. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).								
L.6.1e. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.								
L.6.2a. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/ parenthetical elements.								
L.6.3a. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.[3]								
L.6.3b. Maintain consistency in style and tone.								

Standard	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9-10	Grade 11-12
L.7.1c. Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.								
L.7.3a. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.								
L.8.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.								
L.9-10.1a. Use parallel structure.								

Appendix C: Language Knowledge Survey

The following is a scale questionnaire to assess your comfort level with various aspects of language: circle one (SA, A, DK, D, and SD) that best fits your answer

SA- strongly agree, A- agree, DK- don't know, D- disagree, SD- strongly disagree

1)	The most useful definition for a sentence is that it is a complete thought	SA	A	DK	D	SD
2)	The definition that a noun is a "person, place, thing, or idea" accurately describes a noun	SA	A	DK	D	SD
3)	The definition that an adjective describes a noun is accurate	SA	A	DK	D	SD
4)	A pronoun replaces a noun	SA	A	DK	D	SD
5)	Verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs cannot be accurately described solely based off their meaning	SA	A	DK	D	SD
6)	A sentence is one or more clause	SA	A	DK	D	SD
7)	A phrase is the same as a clause	SA	A	DK	D	SD
8)	A clause consists of a predicate and a subject	SA	A	DK	D	SD
9)	Written sentences cannot begin with "and", "but", or "because"	SA	A	DK	D	SD
10)	The structure of a sentence depends on the genre (fiction, editorial, non-fiction, poetry)	SA	A	DK	D	SD
11)	A subject indicates the do-er of the action	SA	A	DK	D	SD

Appendix D: Grammar Chart

	GRAMMAR CHART Cornelia Paraskevas (2015)
FORM (use of affixes and syntactic frames)	FUNCTION (position in construction)
VERBS -can have suffixes: -ed, -s, -ing -can be preceded by *must* -can be made into imperatives (orders) a. FINITE/TENSED VERBS -show tense (-s, -ed) or mood -can be preceded by subject personal pronoun (e.g. I)	AUXILIARY VERBS (carry negation/move next to the subject in questions) -Proper : -HAVE + Ven/-ed (perfect) -BE+ Ving (progressive) -BE + Ven/ed (passive) -Do (used when there is no other auxiliary for negation/question) -Modal (may/might, will/would, shall/should, must, can/could)—finite; followed by bare infinitive LEXICAL VERBS: Transitive (DO/IO/OPred) (intrinsic meaning) .Copular (SPred.) Intransitive (often AC follows)
b. NON-FINITE VERBS (Non-finite verbs are not marked for tense) A. INFINITIVE FORMS (to + "V") or bare (base form) i.e to be, to waste, to know	"COMPLETERS" (REQUIRED ELEMENTS) Subject: <u>Not to be skeptical</u> is hard. Extraposed subject: It is hard <u>not to be skeptical</u>. Object: My father didn't like <u>to waste anything.</u> Subj. Predicative: The global aim of writing is <u>to transform writer-based prose into reader-based prose.</u> MODIFIERS Adjectival (Post modifier) : This is the only way <u>to guarantee survival of the last stands of ancient forests.</u> Adverbial: He enriches the soil with lime <u>to lower its acidity</u>. (Can be preceded by 'in order'or can move)

B. –ING /-EN FORMS	COMPLETERS Subject: Running wire is the toughest step in extending your stereo's range. Object: Avoid placing speakers in a corner. Complement: The biggest threat to Sierra is logging.
	MODIFIERS (PARTICIPLES) Errors producing negative reaction occur with low frequency. Fearing for his life, he fled the country.

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